id: 241825
date: 12/28/2009 20:45
refid: 09HAVANA772
origin: US Interests Section Havana
classification: CONFIDENTIAL
destination:
header:
VZCZCXYZ0028
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHUB #0772/01 3622045
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 282045Z DEC 09
FM USINT HAVANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5053

---------- header ends ----------

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 000772

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR WHA/CCA ALSO FOR CA/OCS
DEPT PASS TO NSC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/27/2019
TAGS: CASC, PREL, PGOV, CU
SUBJECT: FIRST CONSULAR VISIT TO ALAN PHILIP GROSS

Classified By: COM Jonathan Farrar for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) SUMMARY: Consul General Martha Melzow visited arrested Amcit Philip Alan Gross on Monday, December 28 at Villa Marista. Although Gross was arrested on December 3, consular access was not granted by the GOC until December 24. Gross told Congen that he is charged with contraband. He appeared to be in good spirits although suffering from high blood pressure. Gross signed a Privacy Act Waiver (PAW) for his wife, his lawyer and Jack McCarthy of DAI. END SUMMARY

2. f(t_
---
4. (C) Gross said that the tests revealed high blood pressure as well as the existence of a duodenal ulcer for which he is receiving medication. Gross is currently taking five prescriptions, three for the ulcer, one for hypertension and one for elevated levels of uric acid in his urine. He said he had not experienced hypertension prior to his arrest, and hoped that he would be off the medication soon, because he felt that it was affecting his clear-headedness and balance. Gross mentioned that he had fallen down and also fainted, and that he needed to stand up from a sitting position slowly. Gross commented to the CG that he had lost 30 pounds, noting that he was trying to limit the amount of

carbohydrates in his diet. He observed that he was given lettuce and fresh fruit to eat and joked that good health seemed to be a very important concept for the prison. (COMMENT: Post will request another visit soonest to address these health concerns. END COMMENT.)

ARREST CONDITIONS

---

5. (C) Gross declared that he was being treated well and was not physically abused by GOC officials. However, he did reveal that the interrogation schedule had been very intense at first; he estimated that it had endured on average 2 hours daily. He repeated that GOC officials had treated him with respect. His cell has a television and a fan; however, he expressed concern about having to share it with two other individuals. He told the CGthat although he was wearing his own clothes, this was the first day he had been allowed to use a belt and shoelaces. Gross said that he had been permitted outside for a walk in the organic garden belonging to the prison. He confirmed that he had spoken twice by telephone with his wife on December 6 and December 23.

6. (C) When queried by the CG as to what he was charged with, Gross said quote contraband end quote with no further clarification. Gross stated that his personal effects at the time of his arrest consisted of a rolling suitcase, a backpack and that he had been carrying two cell phones, an IPOD, his CityBank password decoder and some electronic adaptors, in addition to toiletries and his U.S. passport which had been confiscated by Cuban authorities.

7. (C) The CG relayed the message from his family: that they were well, that they had retained an American lawyer for him and that the attorney was trying to secure Cuban counsel for him. At that point Gross pulled the business card of a Cuban attorney who had come to visit him (Armanda Nuria Pinero Sierra of the firm Bufete de Servicios Especializados or Law Firm of Specialized Services). He asked that post clarify with his U.S. lawyer that they would handle finding him an attorney so he did not have to worry about it.

8. (C) The CG gave Gross the funds which his wife had sent via OCS trust and also informed him that a box of supplies including energy bars, multi-vitamins, and reading material as well as some toiletries and other items, had been left with GOC officials for his use. The visit lasted about an hour. GOC officials expressed surprise that it had not lasted longer.

9. (C) Comment: Gross wanted to know if the CG knew about his activities. She said she did not. He then said that anyone could do a Google search on the Internet and find out what he had been doing in his career. He told the CG that the GOC officials quote knew everything end quote before he was taken into custody and had asked for details of all his activities, i.e., the projects and companies he had worked for in the 54 countries he had travelled to during his 30 year career. He asked the CG if there were other Americans in the same situation, i.e., other Amcits entering Cuba on the same type of program who had been detained. He also asked the CG if his case might be compared in any way to that of the Cuban Five. The CG did not respond to either of

these questions.Finally, Gross asked that post relay to his family that his sense of humor is intact, that he is worried about them and that he wants his name kept out of the press. He also said that he wanted to thank everyone for all the efforts being made on his behalf.

FARRAR

==========CABLE ENDS==========